

Buddhists in the Two Koreas: North-South Interactions

Bernard Senécal

Abstract

Northern Buddhists are often described as the “most active and powerful” North Korean religious organization. Moreover, many Korean Buddhists see their tradition as an indigenous one, unlike Christianity, which they deem “imported.” Accordingly, Buddhist representatives from both sides of the DMZ believe that a merger of North and South Korean Buddhism is an essential key to the peninsula’s reunification. However, that vision comes up against a number of obstacles. Firstly, no matter how dynamic it is, the Chobulyŏn 朝佛聯, which is the North Korea’s sole Buddhist body, has remained subordinate to the *Chuch’e sasang* 主體思想 (or Juche, Self-Reliance ideology) since its birth in 1972. Secondly, many Southern Christian groups, untroubled by their “imported nature”, compete fiercely with Buddhists for the religious conquest of the North. Thirdly, two other factors have hampered the efforts made by Southern Buddhists to get closer to their Northern counterparts: the lack of continuity characterizing the reunification policies of the last four Southern presidential administrations; and the Chogyejong’s 曹溪宗 lack of autonomy regarding those policies. Despite these obstacles, Venerable P’ŏpt’a 法範 (b. 1945), alias the Bodhisattva of Reunification, maintains that it is imperative to keep engaging North Korean Buddhists as they are, and to keep providing material help to Northerners—especially food—through Buddhist channels. Doing otherwise would not only be counter to the spirit of universal compassion which typifies Mahāyāna Buddhism, but also leave Southern Buddhists unprepared in the case of unexpected political changes in P’yŏngyang.

Keywords: North Korean Buddhism, South Korean Buddhism, Interaction, reunification, P’ŏpt’a 法範, Beopta 法範

Bernard Senécal (Sŏ Myŏngwŏn 徐明源) is Director of the Institute for the Study of Religion and Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Sogang University. He received his Ph.D. from Paris VII University in 2004 with a dissertation on the Sŏn Master Sŏngchŏl (1912–1993), and has been a qualified Sŏn Master since 2007. His recent articles include “A Critical Reflection of the Chogyŏ Order’s Campaign for the Worldwide Propagation of Kanhwa Sŏn” (2011), “Sŏn Master T’ŏeong Sŏngchŏl’s Legacy: A Reflection on the Political Background of the Korean Sudden/Gradual Debate” (2012), and “*Qohéleth* et le *Sūtra du Diamant*, sagesse biblique et bouddhique (*Qohélet* and the *Diamond Sūtra*, Biblical and Buddhist Wisdoms)” (2013).

Correspondence: senecber@sogang.ac.kr

Buddhahood and Nirvāṇa for All

Human beings have North and South,
 Buddha-nature does not have North and South
 (*In chūk yu nambuk* 人即有南北,
Pulsŏng chūk mu nambuk 佛性即無南北).¹

This essay is a study on how North and South Korean Buddhists interact with one another on a divided peninsula. Mahāyāna Buddhism, one of the three Chinese teachings along with Confucianism and Daoism, first entered Korea in the late fourth century CE (Baker 2008, 30–32). Ever since, the successive generations of people dwelling in the region have shared it as a common inheritance. Contrary to certain claims, Buddhists are still extant in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Moreover, many a scholar says that they are the “most active and the most powerful” religious group, because “Buddhist thought and culture are more deeply rooted compared to other religions” (Pöpt’a 1996, 412–413; 2000, 96). These Buddhists are interacting with their southern counterparts in a number of amazing ways, which shall be examined within this paper. These interactions, mostly inspired by Mahāyāna doctrine, could prove to be a significant contribution to the preparation of Korean reunification,² if some day politicians on all sides display enough will to achieve that goal, or if P’yŏngyang’s regime collapses.

Among its main tenets, Mahāyāna Buddhism claims that all sentient beings, because they are originally endowed with Buddha-nature³ (*pulsŏng* 佛性), can achieve full awakening, i.e. become Buddha (*sōngbul* 成佛). Since the realization of full awakening provides freedom from the cycle of rebirths or *saṃsāra*⁴, i.e. *nirvāṇa*, Mahāyānists consider that becoming a Buddha ought to be the ultimate goal of any human life. Those who strive to reach that end are called bodhisattvas (*posal* 菩薩). As they tread the path leading to Buddhahood, which can be achieved either gradually or suddenly,⁵ bodhisattvas also dedicate all their energies to leading other sentient beings toward the same destination (*sanggu pori hahwa chungsaeng* 上求菩提 下化衆生).⁶ Even though they may have already achieved Buddhahood, bodhisattvas renounce entering *nirvāṇa*

until all other sentient beings have also realized the same goal. In other words, reaching *nirvāṇa* cannot be considered as a purely individual endeavor; on the contrary, it has to be a thoroughly collective one. To be sure, according to Buddhist eschatology, either all sentient beings enter *nirvāṇa* together or none do,⁷ because “one and many are the same without obstruction” (*ilchūкта tachūgil* 一即多 多即一).⁸ In good measure, in the *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經 (*Platform Sūtra*) the young Huineng 慧能 (638–713) clearly states that “Buddha-nature does not have North and South.”⁹

This lofty ideal of oneness deeply inspired Venerable Sin Pöpt’a 申法船 (b. 1945), alias the T’ongil ūi posal 統一의菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Reunification), who considers Mahāyāna Buddhism as the highest common factor of the North-South cultural community (Yu 2003, 1; Kim Chongnak 2006, 106).¹⁰ Pöpt’a and those who share his view are greatly helped by the historical precedent established by Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617–686). Indeed, the latter is widely believed to have used key elements of Mahāyāna teachings to favor—not only in theory but also in practice—the building of a harmonious society during the chaotic first years of the Unified Silla kingdom (668–935). More precisely, Wŏnhyo made the *Hwaōm wōnyung muae sasang* 華嚴圓融無涯思想 (doctrine of perfect interpenetration without obstruction) the basis of his *Simmun hwajaeng-non* 十門和爭論 (*Treatise on the Ten Means to Resolve Disputes*) (Ko 2009, 12). Furthermore, Venerable Haktam’s 鶴潭 (b. 1952) monumental work to establish a credible Buddhist theory of reunification is mostly based on Wŏnhyo’s doctrine (Haktam 2003a, 30–34).

Considering the emphasis placed by Pöpt’a, Haktam, and many other South Korean Buddhists on such a Mahāyānist ideal of salvation for all, it is of great interest to examine how it has fared on the Korean peninsula during the last sixty years, and its potential value as a factor favoring reunification. This examination seems even more important when one keeps in mind that July 27, 2013 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the armistice agreement that ended the three-year combat phase of the Korean War (Kim Bo-geun 2013, 1), but without bringing, it seems, any significant change to the status quo between the two Koreas.

In order to write this essay, I have used all of the written sources on contemporary North Korean Buddhism and its relations to South Korean Buddhism that I have been able to find, giving special attention to the ones authored by people having a firsthand knowledge of North Korea. These sources include those published in 2002 by the *T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn* 統一研究院 (Korea Institute for National Unification or KINU), in 2009 by the *Taehan pulgyo chogyejong t'ongil chongch'aek yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe* 大韓佛教曹溪宗 統一宗策 研究委員會 (Chogyejong Research Committee for a Fundamental Reunification Strategy), and in 2012 by Yi Chibŏm, the director of the *Pukhan chonggyo yŏn'guso* 北韓宗教研究所 (Research Institute on North Korean Religions).¹¹ I have also interviewed, in the name of the *Journal of Korean Religions (JKR)*, two monks of the Chogyejong 曹溪宗 (Chogye order) who have an exceptionally long and deep experience with North Korean Buddhism: the Venerable Pŏpt'a, who has written a doctoral degree on the subject (Pŏpt'a 1996; 2000)¹² and who to date has visited the North over a hundred times; and the Venerable Chejŏng 濟政 (b. 1962), who spent three years in the Kŭmgang Mountains (2004–2007) supervising the reconstruction of Singye-sa 神溪寺.¹³

The first section of this essay is a historical overview in four periods of North Korean Buddhism from liberation in 1945 until the present. The second section is focused on North Korean Buddhism today and the *Chosŏn pulgyodo yŏnmaeng*, 朝鮮佛教道聯盟 (Chosŏn Buddhist Federation, abbr. *Chobulyŏn*¹⁴ 朝佛聯), the only Buddhist organization in the North, and introduces the latter in much more detail. The third section presents how the North's *Chuch'e sasang* (主體思想 Juche, or Self-Reliance, ideology) sees religion in general, and more specifically, world Buddhism and Korean Buddhism. The fourth section, based primarily on interviews with the aforementioned personalities, is chiefly focused on showing how the Chobulyŏn and the Chogyejong are interacting in view of the reunification of North and South Korea. The conclusion evaluates the impact of the religious exchanges taking place between North and South Korean Buddhists on the peninsula's reunification prospects.

History of North Korean Buddhism

Understanding how Buddhists from the two Koreas interact requires a basic knowledge of Buddhism on both sides of the DMZ. Plenty of information in Western languages is available on South Korean Buddhism, but not much on its northern counterpart. Accordingly, this part and the next are chiefly focused on introducing Pukchosŏn 北朝鮮¹⁵ Buddhism and the Chobulyŏn. As the unique North Korean organized Buddhist body, it remains the sole counterpart of South Korean Buddhist organizations.

“Before the Korean war, northern Korea was more religious than southern Korea, though most Buddhists (80 percent) were in the south” (Baker 2013, 1). In the north, just before the war broke out, there were 732 Buddhist monks and nuns (*sŭngnyŏ* 僧侶),¹⁶ 518 temples¹⁷ (*sa* 寺), and the Chobulyŏn had 375,438 lay Buddhists members registered (Pöpt’a 2000, 109). Today, there are roughly 300 married monks but no nuns, and 67 temples.¹⁸ The Chobulyŏn boasts some 10,000 lay members. Most of the latter are members of the *Chosŏn Nodongdang* 朝鮮勞動黨 (Chosŏn Worker’s Party) who have been allowed to join the association (Pöpt’a 2000, 107). More accurately, they are “monks and their family members; the instructors of the central and regional people’s committees (*wiwŏnhoe ŭi kyojikcha* 委員會의 敎職者) who administer those monks; and the people living in the villages near monasteries (*sahach’on* 寺下村)” (Cho Sŏngnyŏl 2009, 161). Unless one lives nearby a monastery, it is almost impossible to become a member of a Buddhist community (Yi Chibŏm 2000, 7). Some forty percent of the laity is composed of female Buddhists (Yi Chibŏm 2000, 6). Besides these ten thousand members, up to a hundred thousand people gather at temples on the anniversary of the Buddha’s Birthday (*Sŏkka T’ansinil* 釋迦誕辰日), which began to be celebrated again in 1988 (Pöpt’a 2000, 97, 115).

Considering that in Chinese thought “10,000” often plays the role of a symbolic figure synonymous with the infinite, i.e. *man* 萬 = ∞, one may either believe that there are countless Buddhist followers in North Korea or conclude, more realistically, that the statistics available are not fully reliable. In any case, these figures are amazingly small when compared to the South Korean ones, or to what they were at the end of Japanese rule (1910–1945) or just before the 6.25 Upheaval.

Historically, the fate of Pukchosŏn Buddhism is inseparable from the fate of other religions in the North after liberation in 1945. Both Pöpt'a and the T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn divide the history of religions under communist rule from liberation until today into four main periods¹⁹ (Pöpt'a 1996, 408–11; 2000, 81–88; T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 7–23). Although the resulting two chronologies agree on the dating of the first period (1945–1950), they do not agree on that of the following three.²⁰ However, when compared, the overall historical contents of these two series of three periods each sounds very much like “six of one and half a dozen of the other.” Accordingly, I have chosen to use both chronologies: my historical explanation follows the T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn's; and the chart illustrating the timeline, at the end of this essay, follows Pöpt'a's.

The first period, from 1945 to 1950, is one of transition and/or suppression, during which all religions were described as premodern, superstitious and unscientific. Although the Chosŏn Worker's Party intended to either completely reorganize and fully control or completely suppress religious groups, it still had to work in solidarity with them as far as was possible, because it needed their help to establish a new society. Consequently, each religion was treated according to its degree of agreement with the spirit of the communist revolution, and the quality of its collaboration with the political authorities to embody that spirit in society.

Against that backdrop, two official Buddhist organizations were created around the twenty-sixth of November 1945: the *Pukchosŏn pulgyodo ch'ong-yŏnmaeng* 北朝鮮 佛教道 總聯盟 (North Chosŏn General Buddhist Federation) and the *Pukchosŏn pulgyo yŏnhaphoe* 北朝鮮 佛教 聯合會 (North Chosŏn Alliance of Buddhist Associations). One month later, on December 26, 1945, the *Pukchosŏn pulgyo ch'ongyŏnmaeng* 北朝鮮 佛教 總聯盟 (North Chosŏn Buddhist General Federation), the ancestor of the Chobulyŏn, was created (Pöpt'a 2000, 86, 156). What happened to the two other associations is not clear after 1948. It is likely that they merged into the *Pukchosŏn pulgyo ch'ongyŏnmaeng*. During the years leading to the Korean War, although the Chosŏn Worker's Party did not attempt to execute monks and nuns, it did not provide the temples enough food to allow the survival of all of them. Moreover, it confiscated a considerable amount of monastic land.²¹ Consequently, as mentioned above, roughly half of them were forced to return to secular life.

For instance, Sōgwang-sa 釋王寺 (in Kangwŏn-do, Kosan-gun 江原道 高山郡), lost 4,000 *chŏngbo* 旱步 (12,000,000 *p'yŏng* 坪 or 42,800,000 m²) of fixed property and saw its population reduced from 200 monks to a mere thirty. Small temples located in or close to urban areas were not given enough food to maintain a population of more than five monks each. Temples located in remote mountainous areas (*sanak pulgyo* 山岳佛教) were more fortunate, because the Chosŏn Worker's Party did not perceive their existence as a serious threat (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 10).²² Overall, if Buddhism was not suppressed, it was considerably weakened; what remained of it was practically deprived of autonomy.

The Chobulyŏn's highly centralized organization greatly facilitated the control exerted by the Chosŏn Worker's Party over Buddhists and encouraged their unconditional collaboration with it. This was corroborated by the contents of the two platforms put in place by the Chobulyŏn: a five-point one in 1945, and a revised and much stronger seven-point one in 1949 (Pŏpt'a 2000, 156–157). The latter was most probably established in view of avoiding further repression and losses. It contained a commitment to struggle for the enforcement of the DPRK's constitution, to get rid of all traces of Japanese imperialism, and to strengthen the battlefront for reunification. It also included a commitment to assist the army, develop friendships with the USSR and its satellites, and foster the spirit of the working class among Buddhists for the prosperity of the fatherland and the development of its culture. Finally, there was a commitment to establish a new kind of Buddhist teaching and new learning methods, adapted to it and to the new era (Pŏpt'a 2000, 157).

These platforms, which displayed a willingness to help Kim Il Sung secure his power during the years following liberation, are the main reasons why Buddhism suffered comparatively less during this period than the Christians or the Ch'ŏndogyo 天道教 followers, who could be arrested and even physically suppressed (Pŏpt'a 2000, 111). Because they were better organized than Buddhists, those two groups were also in a better position to resist the attempts made to restructure and control them from 1945 onwards (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 32–33).²³ They finally fell victim to repression because of their potential capabilities to lead opposition to the revolution led by the Chosŏn Worker's Party. In

contrast, Buddhism was far less organized. It had already been largely disempowered, not only by the enforcement of the *Ōkpul sungyu chōngch'aek* 抑佛崇儒政策 (Policy to repress Buddhism and promote Confucianism) during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), but also by the authoritarian structure that the Japanese put in place to keep it under strict administrative control.²⁴ Another fact, albeit obviously secondary in the context of this first period,²⁵ contributed to the relative safety of Buddhism. Because it had been part of the religious landscape of the peninsula for more than a millennium and a half, it was not considered a foreign religion but as an indigenized one.

The second period, from 1950 to 1972, was characterized by active religious repression during the Korean War, and by all-out anti-religious propaganda in its aftermath (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 12). In the case of Buddhism, this repression was motivated by the desire to keep in check the monks and nuns who were tempted to hide independence fighters opposed to communism and/or draft dodgers (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 13). That repression certainly was also used to prevent resentful Northern monks and nuns, who had been dispossessed of their land and/or forced to go back to secular life, from collaborating with South Korea through Buddhist networks. To carry out this repressive policy, Buddhists were forced to enroll in the army and the activities of temples were closely monitored (Pöpt'a 2000, 82–83). As a result of the aforementioned propaganda, between 1954 and 1958 North Korean society adopted an anti-religious consensus that forced religions, including Buddhism, to disappear from the social landscape (Pöpt'a 2000, 83). The war generated a considerable amount of hostility toward the United States and Christianity and because they were perceived as agents of America, Catholics and Protestants fared worse than the members of other religious organizations.

The third period began in 1972, with the North-South Talks (*nambuk hoedam* 南北會談) of July 4 and the implementation of the state-led Policy for the Revitalization of Religion (*kukka chudojŏk chonggyo hwalsŏnghwa chōngch'aek* 國家主導的宗教活性化政策). It ended in 1988, the year of the Seoul Olympics, which was preceded by the fall of South Korea's dictatorship and the birth of its democracy. Paradoxically, the new religious policy enshrined in the revised constitution allowed not only institutionalized religions and religious freedom, but also

freedom of anti-religious propaganda (Article 54). Since this policy shift took place after the Chosŏn Worker's Party had practically succeeded in eradicating religion from political and social life, the religious institutions taking shape then were all *yumyŏng musil* 有名無實 ("in name only") and thus cooperated unconditionally with the political establishment.

This new socio-political context allowed the *Pukchosŏn pulgyo ch'ongyŏn-maeng* to make a comeback to the surface of society as early as August 1972 (Pöpt'a 2000, 114); its tracks had been lost in the aftermath of the Korean War. According to Pöpt'a, the organization changed its name and went into hiding several times before its reappearance in 1972 (Pöpt'a 2000, 96). In 1972, it took the name *Chosŏn pulgyodo yŏnmaeng* 朝鮮 佛教道 聯盟 (Chosŏn Buddhist Federation, abbr. Chobulyŏn 朝佛聯). Besides the names and the terms of office of the association's first and second presidents,²⁶ practically no data is available.

In 1979, Pak T'aeho 朴泰浩 (1919–2005), bearing the dharma-name Hangnim 鶴林, became its third president. He had studied at Pohyŏn-sa 普賢寺²⁷ between 1935 and 1941,²⁸ and then lived as a monk in Paekun-sa 白雲寺 and Pohyŏn-sa from 1941 to 1952, but with an interlude during which he worked as a coal miner between 1944 and 1945 (Pöpt'a 2000, 146). He trained under the authority of a master whose identity remains an object of speculation (Yi Chibŏm 2012k, 2). If these facts are true, they point to the existence of some continuity within the Northern Buddhist tradition between the period preceding independence and the one beginning in 1972. As we shall see, the fact that most older North Korean monks could be men who had been living a monastic life before liberation also points to such continuity.

Be that as it may, it was at the beginning of this third historical period that the Chobulyŏn began to express its views about South Korean politics. In 1972, for instance, when the Park Chung-hee regime in the South became decidedly more authoritarian, the Chobulyŏn started making strong declarations condemning his policies (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 21).²⁹ In 1973, for example, when Pastor Pak Hyŏnggyu was arrested for having expressed his views against President Park's iron-fisted politics, the Chobulyŏn made a public declaration of protest (Pöpt'a 2000, 114). If such bold actions began to take place then, it

is because the Chosŏn Worker's Party needed internationally credible bodies to criticize the South Korean government. In the long run, it also began to need them to interact with Southern organizations, and to develop contacts with overseas ones.

The fourth period began in 1988 and remains open; some scholars identify it with the Period of Emergence from the Cold War (*t'alnaengjŏn sigi* 脫冷戰時期) (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 23). It is characterized by Article 68 of the 1992 Constitution, which rescinded Article 54 of the 1972 Constitution granting the freedom to make anti-religious propaganda. Moreover, Article 68 also recognized established religions, their right to construct religious buildings and to perform religious rituals (Pŏpt'a 2000, 71). P'yŏngyang's regime was eager to show that there were deep and natural affinities between religion and its "Self-Reliance" (Chuch'e/Juche) ideology. It was not risking much politically since North Korean youngsters had no idea about what religion was (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 22).

As a result, in 1986, the Chobulyŏn joined the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB).³⁰ In 1988, the feast commemorating the awakening of the Buddha (*chop'ail* 照破日³¹) began to be celebrated again, and in 1989 the "translation" of the Grand Tripiṭaka was completed.³² Both a Catholic and a Protestant church were built in P'yŏngyang in 1988. Catholic priests, Protestant pastors, and lay Christians,³³ as well as many overseas Koreans, began to visit North Korea (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 21–23).

All of these changes took place because the Northern regime, challenged by South Korea's democratization and the success of the Seoul Olympics, wanted to improve its international image. In view of joining the United Nations with the South in 1991, the North also needed to build a new frontline reunification policy.

It is against this backdrop that in 1998, Chobulyŏn's President Pak T'aeho received the *Choguk t'ongilsang* 祖國 統一賞 (Fatherland Reunification Award). One month later, he was appointed a *ch'oego inmin hoeŭi sangim wiwŏn* 最高人民會議 常任委員 (permanent member of the Supreme People's Assembly). Four days later, he changed his name to Pak T'aehwa 朴泰和, i.e. Pak the Great Peace Maker or the Great Reconciler (Pŏpt'a 2000, 148).³⁴ This series of events

most probably took place to favor the development of exchanges between Buddhists from North and South Korea. To be sure, as mentioned above, Pŏpt'a had declared three years earlier that Buddhism was “the highest common factor of the North-South cultural community.”³⁵

After this exploration of the four historical periods through which North Korean religion has passed since 1945, let us now examine the sole Northern Buddhist body in more detail.

North Korean Buddhism Today—The Chobulyŏn 朝佛聯

The Chobulyŏn is a state public organization. It is guided by the *Chosŏn no-dongdang t'ongil chŏnsŏn-bu che 6 kuk* 朝鮮勞動黨 統一戰線部 第6局 (Chosŏn Workers' Party Reunification Frontline Ministry Sixth Office), which supervises North Korea's religious policy, and it falls under the jurisdiction of the *Choguk chŏnsŏn chungang wiwŏnhoe che 6 kuk* 祖國戰線中央委員會 第6局 (Fatherland Frontline Central Committee Sixth Office). Officially, candidates to the chairmanship are appointed by vote, although who has the right to vote in their election is unclear. Normally, they must have passed the *Pŏpkye chagyŏk kosi* 法戒資格考試 (Teachings and Precepts Competence Exam) and have gone through all the steps leading to the status of *taesŏnsa* 大禪師 (eminent meditation master). After the third Chairman Pak T'aeho, the fourth was Yu Yŏngsŏn (2006–2008), the fifth Sim Sangjin (2008–2012), and the present holder of the office is Kang Surin (Yi Chibŏm 2012g, 7–8).

Even though Kang has not passed the Teachings' and Precepts' Competence Exam, he has been appointed eminent mediation master and selected to become chairman (Yi Chibŏm 2012k, 6). However, just who appointed him is not clear. Moreover, he may be a relative of the late Kim Il Sung 金日成 (1912–1994) on the latter's mother's side. One of the reasons for thinking so is that Kim's mother's family name was Kang. Another is that Kang Surin was appointed soon after Kim Jong Un (Kim Chŏngŭn) 金正恩 (b. ca. 1983) became the DPRK's *chusŏk* 主席 (head of state). Moreover, there was no obvious reason to demote the fifth chairman Sim Sangjin (2008–2012), who had a lot of experience and was much appreciated by Southerners.

The Chobulyŏn's monks are civil servants with a social status that seems to have much improved since the 1990s. According to the *Chumin sŏngbun chosa saŏp* 住民成分 調査事業 (Research Project on the Population's Composition) carried out between 1966 and 1970, on a list of fifty-one social categories the monks ranked 38th. In other words, their status was low and considered hostile to the Chosŏn Nodongdang (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn, 2002, 34). In addition to the fact that the Chosŏn Worker's Party has since 1970s begun to need their help, another reason for the improvement of their social condition may be the financial help provided by Southern religions to the Northern ones (Kim Pyŏngno 2002, 48–49).

Nowadays, monks seem relatively well paid by North Korean standards. In 2002, for instance, the abbot of Yonghwa-sa 永和寺, located in P'yŏngyang, earned a monthly salary of 150 North Korean wŏn, which at the time corresponded to 50,000 South Korean wŏn or seventy American dollars. This was equivalent to the salary of a senior North Korean medical doctor or university professor (T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 37). This is high by North Korean standards, but it is the salary of a senior abbot at the head of a big temple in the capital city; ordinary monks certainly earn less (Pöpt'a 1996, 422). In addition to their monthly salary, monks are normally fed by the Chosŏn Worker's Party. Every once in a while they can also receive food alms from the laity (Pöpt'a 1996, 424; 2000, 99; Yi Chibŏm 2012b, 1).

Monks are all married unless divorced or widowers. Until a few years ago, they did not shave their heads, wore leather shoes and plain clothes; they only put on black monastic robes when paying homage to Buddha (*yebul* 禮佛) with short and simple rituals (Pöpt'a 1996, 424; 2000, 141). In other words, they did not live as *ch'ulgaja* (出家者 one who has renounced secular life). According to Chejŏng, despite what many among them claim, whether they really are *bigus* (比丘 *bhikṣu* or Buddhist monk) is far from clear. Nevertheless, until the mid-1990s they were quite old, maybe because they were selected from men who had already been monks prior to liberation. It is probably also because religious professions, including careers in Buddhism, were perceived as neither necessary nor attractive by young people in the DPRK (Pöpt'a 1996, 422). Nothing indicates that there has been anything to modify this perception since then.

As a Buddhist community, the monks are characterized by their administrative work (*sap'an sŭngga* 事判僧家), i.e. temple management, not proselytizing or meditation (*ip'an* 理判). Let us keep in mind that generally temples are tourist attractions, not places to pay homage to the Buddha. At the same time, monks often display hard manual workers' hands. Indeed, another of their assigned tasks consists in climbing the neighboring mountains to find and gather medicinal plants (Cho Sŏngnyŏl 2009, 162). Until 1998, they commuted to their work; now some dwell permanently at the temples. Yi suggests that the change came after the wife of the late composer Yun Isang 尹伊桑 (1917–1995) told authorities that it would be nice, when visiting Buddhist temples, to be able to hear the chanting of Amitābha Buddha's name (*yŏmbul* 念佛) (Yi Chibŏm 2012b, 3).

The Chobulyŏn's monks say that they mostly use the *Diamond Sūtra* and the *Heart Sūtra*. Although they often claim that they belong to the Chogyejong 曹溪宗, notwithstanding the use of these sūtras the “Northern Chogyejong” obviously does not have much in common with its Southern counterpart.

The Chobulyŏn runs a school called the Pulhagwŏn 佛教院 (Buddhist Academy), which provides a basic three-year program for the education of future monks, followed by on-the-ground training lasting between six months and a year. The Pulhagwŏn was established in 1989 and is now located inside the Chobulyŏn's headquarters in P'yŏngyang's Moranbong 牡丹峯 area, sometimes called the “Champs Élysées” of the North Korean capital. Indeed, it is a posh area displaying large avenues, magnificent buildings, huge statues and a Kaesŏnmun 凱旋門 (Arch of Triumph) commemorating Kim Il Sung's battles against the Japanese. Unveiled in 1982, it was built to stand taller than the original “Arc de Triomphe” built by Napoleon on Paris' Champs Élysées (Cha 2012, 274b). To submit an application to the Pulhagwŏn, candidates need at least a high school graduation certificate. To be accepted, they have to be in touch with a Buddhist temple or be recommended by one of the Chobulyŏn's city or county (*kun* 郡) committees (Yi Chibŏm 2012i, 7; T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn 2002, 35). The following chart provides a description of the structure and content of the study program offered by the academy.

Chosŏn Pulgyodo yŏnmaeng Pulgyo hagwŏn ŭi kyogwa kwamok

朝鮮 佛敎道 聯盟 佛敎學院의 敎果果木

(Curriculum of the Chobulyŏn Buddhist Academy)

Divisions	Educational System (period of time)	Number of Students	Contents	Teachers
Buddhist Academy (佛學院)	3-year system	Around 30 students every semester	1st Year: History (Buddhist history etc.) Buddhist rituals etc. 2nd, 3rd Year: History of Chosŏn Buddhism, catechism, rituals, culture (customs) <i>Diamond Sūtra</i> , <i>Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras</i> etc., scriptures' commentaries, philosophy etc.	Chobulyŏn's executive members, senior monks Outside researchers are also invited for certain subjects
Buddhist Training Center (location moves from one temple to another in the North Korean provinces)	6 months (short curriculum) 12 months (long curriculum)	Around 10 students	Buddhist history etc. Buddhist rituals etc.	

* Translated from Korean and adapted by the author (Yi Chibŏm 2012i, 6).

From much of the aforementioned data, it is easy to infer that the Chobulyŏn's headquarters and its activities nationwide are under the control of the Nodong-dang Central Committee. Let us take, as examples, the composition of the association's membership, the Pulhagwŏn's location and the appointment last year of Kang Surin as sixth chairman of the association. These facts provide us a glimpse of how Buddhism has to be taught and preached at the Pulhagwŏn

and in DPRK temples. Accordingly, one may conclude that Buddhists and Buddhism are most welcome as long as they respect the DPRK's Juche ideology and accept to be subordinate to it. The more dedicated they are to the service of that doctrine, the more they can work hand-in-hand with the Nodongdang Central Committee and take part in its unending class struggle. As the next section will show, this is the ideological context in which North Korean "religious freedom" has to be understood.

How Does the DPRK's Juche Ideology See Buddhism?

The following series of quotations, all extracted from North Korean academic literature, allow us to understand how the Juche ideology relates to religions in general and to Buddhism in particular. Let us begin with two alluring statements:

We are not against religion; we just reject religious men³⁶ who are opposed to our land. [...] Buddhism is in accord with our Juche ideology because the ultimate goals of Buddhists are human welfare and peace, progress of this nation, world peace [...]. (Pöpt'a 1996, 446, 497; 2000, 253)³⁷

Marxism denies all religions but Juche ideology does not deny them. Buddhism teaches *nirvāṇa*, peace of mind. It is the denial of ego, desire, and it is truly philanthropic. It shares this with Juche ideology. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 541–42)

Notwithstanding such conciliatory statements, generally speaking, North Korean academic literature interprets Buddhism and Buddhist history from the viewpoint of class struggle and is far more critical of it. Let us quote a few examples coming from the *Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 哲學事典 (*Dictionary of Philosophy*) edited and published by the *Chosŏn sahoe kwahagwŏn ch'ŏrhak yŏn'guso*³⁸ 朝鮮社會科學院 哲學研究所 (Research Institute in Philosophy of the Chosŏn Social Science Academy).

Buddhism teaches fatalism, that men's destinies are determined by their previous lives and therefore that they should endure all their sufferings in the present life, and that if they don't submit to their destiny, they will be thrown into hell where they shall suffer from severe punishment after death. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 274)

[In Korea, Mahāyāna Buddhism] was used by feudal rascals to suppress and exploit the people and it severely poisoned the development of politics, culture and economy. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 165)

[In Korea, the] Chogyŏ sect of Buddhism [...] became dominant [...] and seriously poisoned the development of society. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 615)

The *Dictionary of Philosophy* also provides fourteen entries introducing famous Koreans of the past, either Buddhist monks or Confucian scholars related to Buddhism, preceded by one on the Buddha Śākyamuni (ca. 563–483 BCE).³⁹ About the latter it says:

He dreamt of strengthening his land and rationalizing its social inequalities by creating a new religion. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 373)

Out of the fourteen other entries, only one really depicts a Korean monk as a *sŏngja* 聖者 (holy man) truly worthy of respect: Ch'ŏnghŏ Hyujŏng 淸虛休靜, alias Sŏsan Taesa 西山大師 (1520–1604).

There was a positive Patriotic Spirit in him. Quite different from all the former Buddhist scholars, who had escaped from war proclaiming “no-killing” and “compassion,” he broke the traditional example and actively took part in the war to head off Japanese enemies. Though his patriotism was for the protection of the feudal state, it is judged to be positive and progressive when we take into consideration the social conditions of his time. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 568)

It certainly is no coincidence that Pohyŏn-sa, the monastery from which Sŏsan called up an army of monks, is considered the most representative of North Korea's temples and has been transformed into a historical museum considered a "must see" for all tourists visiting North Korea.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Pöpt'a does not hesitate to call it *Pukhan Pulgyo ŭi ōlgul* 北韓佛教의 얼굴 (North Korean Buddhism's face) (Pöpt'a 2000, 280).

Quite unexpectedly, the great Wŏnhyo, understood by many a South Korean Buddhist scholar as the most representative and universal figure of Korean Buddhist history,⁴¹ is not considered as an irreproachable *sŏngja*. Nor is Ŭisang 義湘 (625–702), but this latter case is easy to understand since he was an aristocrat supporting Unified Silla's feudal system.

[To be sure, Ŭisang's] Hwaŏmjong idealistic Buddhist philosophy functioned as a poison to paralyze the working class' spirit of independence and self-reliance. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 689)

Wŏnhyo is treated ambiguously as he is the object of both "rare praise from the North" (Pöpt'a 1996, 480; 2000, 232) and the same kind of criticism directed at Ŭisang, despite the fact that he was not an aristocrat.

Wŏnhyo developed an approach called *hwajaeng* 和爭, [...] on the basis of which he emphasized that one should evaluate something in its totality, rather than from a one-sided perspective based on one's value system. Though this logical approach was based on idealism, and thus served the theoretical rationalization of Buddhism, it was very sophisticated for its time and influenced the development of logical thinking in the Korean mind. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 504)

The Haedongjong 海東宗 [founded by Wŏnhyo] represented the interests of Silla's feudal ruling class. [...] Even his [Wŏnhyo's] understanding of socio-politics was idealistic and reactionary. [The Pure Land he could see] before his eyes [was only] his rationalization of the reactionary state of Silla in his religious illusion. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 505)

Chejŏng is adamant that Wŏnhyo is not perceived as a *sŏngja* in North Korea (Chejŏng 2013). Pojo Chinul's 普照智訥 (1158–1210) thought, well known outside of South Korea thanks to the work of Buswell and other scholars, is defined as follows:

[It is an answer] to the demands of the *yangban* or aristocratic class belonging to the ruling strata of Koryŏ [. . .]. (*Ch'ŏrhak sajŏn* 1988, 689)

Those quotations—and scores of similar ones—not only help us to understand the political context within which Northern Buddhists have to live and how they have to think to remain “orthodox Buddhists,” but they also point to the huge differences in the perception of Buddhist history between North and South Korea. For instance, Haktam's Buddhist theory of reunification, based almost entirely on the thought of Wŏnhyo, is challenged by the former's ambiguous ranking in the Northerners' minds.⁴² According to Chejŏng and Pŏpt'a, the fact that P'yŏngyang does not look upon the Unified Silla period as a truly unified one is one of the reasons why Wŏnhyo is not considered *persona grata*. The DPRK considers that period as one of disunity and consequently names it the *Nambuk punyŏl sidae* 南北分裂時代 (Period of Disunion between North and South). Indeed, much of Koguryŏ's territory did not become part of the so-called Unified Silla; it was lost to Chinese hands during the war for control of the peninsula, before later becoming the kingdom of Parhae 渤海 (698–926). In the light of P'yŏngyang's historical perspective, General Kim Yusin 金庾信 (595–673), who led that war, and Wŏnhyo, who worked at rationalizing its result, cannot be seen as heroes but rather as traitors to the Korean people's working class (Chejŏng & Pŏpt'a 2013).

As claimed by Chejŏng, Northerners also have a deep respect for Sŏsan's disciple Samyŏng Yujŏng 四溟惟政 (1544–1610), and for Han Yongun 韓龍雲, alias Manhae 萬海 (1879–1944) (Chejŏng 2013). What Sŏsan, Samyŏng and Manhae have in common is that they all either fought to repel the Japanese during the Imjin 壬辰 (1592–1598) invasions, or resisted the Japanese when they imposed their rule on the peninsula (1910–1945). Manhae is famous for being one of the thirty-three figures who in 1919 signed the Korean Declaration of Independence during the *Samil undong* 三一運動 (March First Movement).

Compared to Manhae's historical record, those of Sōsan and Samyōng are rather ambiguous. To be sure, their participation in the war to head off the Japanese invaders contributed to safeguard not only the Chosŏn dynasty's feudal order, but also its repressive policy toward Buddhists in favor of Confucians. Nevertheless, as seen in the quotation on Sōsan, the *Dictionary of Philosophy* considers that such ambiguity is fully justified by the historical circumstances surrounding the great master. This leniency obviously comes from the fact that the Juche ideology needs to define Buddhist role models, allowing as well as encouraging all Buddhists to take up arms and go to war whenever it is deemed necessary by the Chosŏn Worker's Party. Given such an objective, great deeds other than "fighting" become secondary when defining who is worthy of becoming a Buddhist *sōngja*. If other criteria of evaluation were applied, great masters like Wŏnhyo and Pojo Chinul might easily be in the good graces of P'yōngyang. But instead of a more sophisticated approach to Korean Buddhist history, in order to make its message on "Buddhist saints" crystal clear, the *Dictionary of Philosophy* has obviously opted for a strict black-and-white logic.

To sum up, in P'yōngyang's understanding of Buddhism, a good Buddhist is a patriot always ready to take up arms and sacrifice his life for the sake of a self-reliant and united nation, under the full control of the working class through the Central Committee of the Chosŏn Workers' Party, i.e. one has to be an unconditional supporter of the Juche ideology. But this "ideal" Buddhist life style corresponds exactly to what the Pukchosŏn Pulgyo Ch'ongyŏnmaeng, the ancestor of the Chobulyŏn, committed itself to in its 1949 seven-point platform.

Interactions between North and South Korean Buddhists:

The Testimonies of Pŏpt'a 法能 and Chejŏng 濟政

As academics having an invaluable knowledge of North Korea, Venerable Pŏpt'a (b. 1945) and Venerable Chejŏng (b. 1962) have provided significant contributions to the research process underlying this essay. To be sure, the first obstacle that any scholar undertaking a study of North Korean Buddhism finds himself confronted with is the difficulty not only in finding, but also in getting

help to gather, reliable data.⁴³ The second obstacle is, all too often, the sketchy and contradictory nature of the data found. The third is the irrepressible impression that parts of the information available are based on sources that are strictly controlled and manipulated by those who circulate them. All this forces one to learn how to read between the lines of the data. It is thanks to the help provided by Pöpt'a and Chejōng that many of these obstacles have been overcome during the writing of the first three sections of this essay, and thanks to the interviews they have given to *JKR* that this last one has taken shape (Pöpt'a & Chejōng 2013).

Pöpt'a is perhaps the most knowledgeable South Korean on North Korean Buddhism. The majority of the sources related to Pukchosōn Buddhism almost always refer directly or indirectly to the results of the pioneering research contained in his doctoral thesis (Pöpt'a 1996; 2000). Pöpt'a has been the abbot of Ŭnhae-sa 銀海寺 (in Yōngch'ōn, Kyōngsangbuk-do) three times, and he is now the chaplain of Dongguk University's Chōnggak-wōn 東國大 正覺院. But above all, he is the chairman of a civilian association: the *Choguk p'yōnghwa t'ongil pulgyo hyōphoe* 祖國 平和統一 佛教協會 (Buddhist Association for Our Fatherland's Peaceful Reunification, abbr. P'yōngburhyōp 平佛協). Through the P'yōngburhyōp, Pöpt'a dedicates the majority of his time and energy to a rapprochement between Northern and Southern Buddhists, with the reunification of the Korean peninsula in view. It is for this reason that he has been nicknamed, as mentioned above, the "Bodhisattva of Reunification."

During the so-called 1994 *Chusap'a* 主思派 witch hunt, sparked by Sogang University's Chairman Pak Hong 朴弘 (b. 1927), Pöpt'a was arrested and imprisoned for a hundred and five days in the infamous Namsan 南山 jail (Kim Chongnak 2006, 2). *Chusap'a* is the abbreviation of *Chuch'e* [Juche] *sasang p'a* 主體思想派 (Self-Reliance ideology Faction). For whatever reason, Pak suddenly began to claim that tens of thousands of South Koreans were pro-North and worked as P'yōngyang's spies. Pöpt'a's activities and contacts with North Korea made him suspect of being a *ppalgaengi chung* 빨갱이 중 (a "red monk"), although he obviously was not a communist at all. Sometime after he was freed, his North Korean counterpart Pak T'aeho once told him in Beijing, breaking into a large smile: "During all those years I have made tremendous efforts to turn you into a *ppalgaengi*, but I have failed" (Sin 1995,



Figure 1. The Venerable Pöpt'a (left) and Chairman Pak T'aeho (right) at North Korea's donation of a Buddhist statue in July 1998, fifty years after national division (Pöpt'a 2000, 6).

69–70; Pöpt'a 2000, 330). For seven years following his release from jail, Pöpt'a remained stigmatized as someone suspected of having violated the National Security Law. The suspicion was based on the content of one of Pöpt'a's articles supposedly expressing sorrow at the time of Kim Il Sung's death (Yu 2003, 109). In fact, Pöpt'a only meant that he considered the latter a far better match than his son for holding a summit on reunification. His ordeal ended when he was finally pardoned by President Kim Dae-jung 金大中 (1924–2009) (Yi Kyöngmi 2011, 1). Unfortunately, Pöpt'a is still on a list of supposedly *ch'inbuk pan'gukka insa* 親北 反局家 人士 (pro-North, anti-nation people) established by a South Korean conservative civilian organization (Kyönghyang Tat'öm 2010).

Started by Pöpt'a, the P'yöngburhyöp is a civilian organization affiliated with the Ministry of Reunification. It began to take shape in Los Angeles, on the occasion of the 1991 World Religions' Youth Festival, when a joint

Buddhist service (*haptong pŏphoe* 合同法會) uniting Buddhists from the North and the South took place. It was officially founded the next year in South Korea. At present, the P'yŏngburhyŏp has a membership of a few hundred people. It is distinct from the *Minjok kongdongch'e ch'ujin ponbu* 民族 共同體 推進 本部 (Head Office for the Promotion of Our People's Communal Society, abbr. Minch'ubon 民推本), which was founded in 2000 and is under the umbrella of the Chogyejong's Social Affairs Department (*sahoebu* 社會部).

Since its foundation, the P'yŏngburhyŏp has been fully involved in a series of activities. Since 1997, it has played a leading role in the building and supplying with wheat flour of a noodle factory in Sariwŏn, Hwanghaebuk-to. The factory is run by the abbot of Sŏngbul-sa 成佛寺, which is located ten kilometers from it. It is capable of producing enough noodles to provide a daily bowl to 7,700 people, including 600 preschool boys and girls. The P'yŏngburhyŏp has taught North Korean craftsmen how to redo the faded Buddhist paintings (*tanch'ŏng* 丹青) of P'yŏngyang's Pŏb'un-am 法雲庵 and of several other locations. It has also provided genuine golden paint for the repainting of a number of Buddha statues. Indeed, most North Korean Buddha statues are not golden but black because fake golden paint has been used to repaint them. The P'yŏngburhyŏp gave 10,000 meters of cloth to allow North Korean monks to make and wear red monks' robes (*changsam* 長衫) and *kaṣāyas* (*kasa* 袈裟⁴⁴) similar to the ones that were worn by northern monks before liberation. Finally, the P'yŏngburhyŏp has taken part in the rebuilding of Kaesŏng's Yŏngt'ong-sa 靈通寺⁴⁵ (2003–2005) and Kŭmgang-san's Singye-sa 神溪寺⁴⁶ (2004–2007) (Yi Chibŏm 2009, 51–53).

Pŏpt'a understood a long time ago that the only peaceful way to develop long lasting contacts with North Koreans is to avoid talking about sensitive topics such as the armed forces, economy, politics, religion, etc. On the contrary, in order to succeed, conversations have to be focused on neutral issues, like common projects for the development of northern Buddhist cultural and historical assets which have a deep significance for South Koreans also. It is this policy that has led, for instance, to the rebuilding of Yŏngt'ong-sa and Singye-sa. But much more than defining and carrying out such big and symbolic projects, Pŏpt'a relentlessly says that the number one duty of South Korean Buddhists toward North Korea is to help it face its food shortage. Although Pŏpt'a

unquestionably is a very dedicated Buddhist monk, for him, it would be a waste of time and energy to try to propagate Buddhist faith in a country where the vast majority of citizens are either hungry or dying of hunger.

Pöpt'a's words are matched by his deeds. Until two years ago, despite huge political obstacles at times, he managed to supply Sariwŏn's noodle factory with seventy tons of wheat flour every month. He insists that constant and regular action over a long period of time is far more important than extraordinary but infrequent action. As he says, in order to survive people must eat every day; if they only eat a meal every once in a while they will die. Accordingly, Pöpt'a is very critical of the "one time generosity" displayed by many a South Korean monk upon visiting North Korea, not to mention un-kept promises to provide help.

Unfortunately, it seems that Lee Myung-bak's (Yi Myŏngbak) 李明博 (b. 1941) regime has rendered the right to supply the factory practically impossible and that as a result the factory is now "rusting" (Pöpt'a 2013). In 2011, the P'yŏngburhyŏp made a final delivery of sixty tons of flour to make bread (Hong 2011, 1). The number of South Korean humanitarian organizations helping North Korea, both civilian and governmental, had regularly increased during the Sunshine Policy, but was reduced to a trickle under Lee Myung-bak's presidency (Song 2013).

Pöpt'a also knows that his contribution of a bowl of noodles to 7,700 people every day was just a small drop of water thrown in the ocean of the North's huge food needs. Nevertheless, he kept providing that daily bowl to those 7,700 people for as long as possible, sometimes even borrowing money to do so. Moreover, Pöpt'a never expected any big reward in return for his compassionate work. He has encountered too many difficulties and hardships over the years to believe in success stories and easy returns. As he acknowledges, he has often wept because at times, on the eve of his departure, the South Korean authorities denied him the right to leave South Korea. At other times he wept because the same authorities kept putting all kinds of other obstacles in the way of his compassionate work in the North. He also wept because a project hardly put in place with Northern Buddhists ended up nowhere after a phone call from P'yŏngyang, despite the development of strong friendships at the grass-roots level.

That is why, deeply inspired by the *Diamond Sūtra*, Pöpt'a keeps talking about the true bodhisattvas' *mujusang posi* 無住相布施 (giving without abiding in perceptual forms).

菩薩於法 應無所住 行於布施 ... 菩薩應如是布施 不住於相 何以故 若菩薩不住相 布施其福德不可思量

A bodhisattva should give without abiding in dharmas [...]

A bodhisattva should give without abiding in perceptual forms. Why? Because the heap of merits of a bodhisattva giving without abiding in perceptual forms is immeasurable. (*Jingang-jing*, T 235.8.749a12-16)

In other words, when giving, one should be as detached as possible from oneself, from others, from what one gives. Whatever one gives, one should give without expecting anything in return. Pöpt'a is in a better position than most to know that doing otherwise, when giving to North Koreans, amounts to self-deception. For Pöpt'a, in the long run, this *mujusang posi* is the best way to favor a rapprochement between the North and the South,⁴⁷ even though he may not be able to see it during his lifetime. A closer look at the rebuilding of Yöngt'ong-sa and Singye-sa can help us to understand how tricky working with North Koreans can become at times and what kind of experiences can be found at the source of Pöpt'a's philosophy of compassion.

On the one hand, the rebuilding of Yöngt'ong-sa and Singye-sa are extraordinary events, which prove that North and South Koreans, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, can define common projects and carry them out together successfully. On the other hand, the same projects also point to the limits of such cooperation. Yöngt'ong-sa, for instance, contrary to the expectations of the Southerners who provided all the construction materials,⁴⁸ has not been rebuilt in wood but in cement by the North Korean army. Unfortunately, it left the rebuilt temple with an *o'my'ong* 汚名 (bad name) (Sim 2009, 125). Moreover, it is not inhabited by a community of North Korean monks, and is only used as a sightseeing place attracting a trickle of tourists. Singye-sa provides an even more striking case in point.

Pöpt'a was the first person to suggest rebuilding Singye-sa. His disciple Chejōng was selected to supervise the temple's reconstruction work because he

has a master's degree in art history from Dongguk University.⁴⁹ Although 400 Southerners had to move into the Diamond Mountains to work with their 600 Northern counterparts for a three-year period, P'yŏngyang did not want more than one monk on its soil. North Korean authorities seemed quite nervous about the fact that a *chonggyoin* 宗教人 (religious man) from the Chogyejong would stay in the Diamond Mountains. Chejŏng went to the Diamond Mountains in November 2004 and returned to the South in November 2007. During all that time Chejŏng had to dwell in a container at a distance from the temple. For good measure, the DPRK never allowed him to spend a night in one or another of the buildings already rebuilt.

During those years, many happy and hopeful events took place. For instance, one day Chejŏng noticed during the Buddhist service (*pŏphoe* 法會) that the participation by the Chobulyŏn's monks had greatly improved in



Figure 2. The celebration for the completion of Singye-sa in 2007. South Korean monks are on the left and their North Korean counterparts on the right. (Ch'oe 2007).

quality. He supposed that they had used the books and tapes he had given them to practice on their own (Chang 2006, 1). What is more, during those three years, the North and South Koreans working together always managed to overcome peacefully the many conflicts that naturally arose between them. That remained true even at the time when North Korea conducted its first nuclear test (October 2006).

However, although the Chogyejong hoped North and South Korean monks would start living together at Singye-sa after the reconstruction was completed, that hope never materialized. The DPRK kindly asked Chejŏng to leave at the end of his three-year contract, a month after a ceremony to celebrate the completion of the construction was held on the October 13, 2007. In December 2007, the Chobulyŏn and the Chogyejong held a meeting to discuss the future administration of Singye-sa. But in February 2008, the head administrator of the Chogyejong announced a measure of temporary suspension of the Order's exchange activities with the North, and the dissolution of the Committee for the Promotion of Singye-sa's Reconstruction (Yi Chibŏm 2009, 51–53). In all, the Chogyejong's headquarters provided some 5,700,000,000 wŏn for the reconstruction; a noble effort, to be sure, made to facilitate a rapprochement between North and South Korean Buddhists in view of a political reunification of the Korean peninsula.

At first glance, what happened then is not clear. Certainly, things did not turn out as expected by the Chogyejong. But Chejŏng says that the Northerners felt deeply saddened by the Chogyejong's decision to leave so early, even before making a nice garden with trees around the buildings of the new Singye-sa. Chejŏng explains that there were communication problems linked to differences in language and mentality. But to an outsider's ears, the whole story sounds rather like that of two people "dreaming different dreams even as they share the same bed" (*tongsang i'mong* 同牀異夢).

A quick look at the reasons defined by Chŏng to explain why North and South Korean religions want to have religious exchange with one another will help us to understand better what happened at Singye-sa. The Southerners want three things: to spread their religions in the North; to put in practice the loving compassion required by their creeds; and to take part in the reunification

movement. Northerners also want religious exchange for three main reasons: to gain sympathy from the Southerners as a part of their reunification policy; to obtain badly needed material support from the South; and to give a better image of North Korean religious policy in an international environment characterized by *détente*. Chŏng insists that the DPRK does not really believe in religion; consequently, it puts forth fake religious bodies to exchange with the international community and to answer the various initiatives taken by Southern religious groups (Chŏng Yonggil 2004, 45–46).

Be that as it may, a community composed of North and South Korean monks, living together in a monastery located in a tourist area of the Diamond Mountains and accessible to both Southerners and Northerners, would have been an extraordinarily powerful symbol of reconciliation on the path leading to reunification. It would have strongly contributed to enhance Buddhism's image as an essentially peaceful tradition, not only in Korea but also all over the world. It would also have been, in many a Buddhist's mind, a huge symbolic victory of Buddhism over Christianity. Indeed, it is commonly assumed among Buddhists that the pilots of the American bombers, which in June 1951 reduced Singye-sa to a heap of rubble, were all Christians.⁵⁰

The DPRK's renunciation of such an amount of symbolic gains makes one wonder whether it wanted Singye-sa to be rebuilt to begin with. If it really did, then why did it not rebuild it much earlier, and on its own? Without doubt, the reason is not just because the DPRK did not possess the technical capacity and/or the financial means to rebuild a compound like Singye-sa. A country capable of building a huge bunker under P'yŏngyang's Kim Il Sung Square (Cha 2012, 222–223) certainly is also capable of rebuilding an old temple if it so decides.

The answer probably is that the DPRK could not flatly refuse the South's offer without damaging its international image. But at the same time, right from the start, it was not at all willing to confer upon Buddhists any kind of leading role in the reunification process. No matter what, in the end, the Juche ideology had to remain in full control of the joyful game going on between Northern and Southern Buddhists at Singye-sa. As the popular Buddhist saying has it: "Toro Amitabul" 도로 阿彌陀佛 ("Let us start chanting Amitābha

Buddha's name all over again"). "Whether Juche is an actual religion or just functions like one," in replacing Amitābha Buddha by Kim Il Sung, "the political implications are chilling" (Baker 2008, 145–151).

Pöpt'a's activities as chairman of the P'yöngburhyöp probably contributed much to reinforce the Chobulyön chairman's role in the DPRK's religious policy toward the South. This reinforcement can explain why in 1998 Pak T'aeho successively received the Choguk T'ongilsang, was appointed permanent member of the Supreme People's Assembly, and took a new highly symbolic name.⁵¹ It is even possible that Pak T'aeho and Pöpt'a developed a genuine friendship, at the level of Buddhahood, beyond North and South divisions. As Pöpt'a once told Pak in 1995: "What is dyed [red] is what fades, and what fades is what is dyed [red]. What is neither dyed nor faded is [our] people, it is reunification" (Pöpt'a 2000, 330). But just like the North and South Korean soldiers who became close friends in Pak Ch'anuk's movie *Kongdong kyöngbi kuyök JSA* 共同警備區域 (Joint Security Area), Pöpt'a and Pak T'aeho could not escape a geostrategic situation based on an all too clear distinction between the North and South (Pak 2000). A key difference from the movie though, is that while Pak T'aeho passed away in 2005, Pöpt'a is still alive and healthy.

As a frontier man trying to create bridges between the two Koreas, Pöpt'a is respected but somewhat marginalized within the Chogyejong. He is definitely moved by a lofty ideal, but at the same time amazingly lucid. Pöpt'a is not afraid of using harsh language to criticize both the South Korean government's and the Chogyejong's lack of consistency and professionalism in their dealings with North Korea (Yi Hakchong, 2012, 1–4). He deplores that the Chogyejong slavishly follows the successive South Korean administrations' reunification policies without ever defining one of its own. As Pöpt'a points out, Northerners display far more consistency in their policy toward the South. Although they live a world apart,⁵² with living standards roughly forty times lower and lingering hunger, they are extremely proud and much time is needed to gain their confidence. Moreover, the only kind of reunification they will ever accept is a *Nam-Puk yönhap* 南北聯合 (North-South confederation) fully respecting their autonomy. They would rather die fighting than acquiesce to being absorbed by the South in a *t'ongil kukka* 統一國家 (reunited country) (Kim Yonghyön 2009, 74–75).

To wrap up, what Pöpt'a and the P'yöngburhyöp keep denouncing is the overall lack of determination and preparation of South Korea to tackle the reunification process. In other words, they maintain that South Korean society should work intensely at unifying itself in view of reunification, overcoming its political, regional and religious differences. And right now, the most urgent step to take is to feed the Northerners, no matter who rules over them, because the rice given now is the first thing that they will remember when the time to get closer with the South arrives.

Reunification: Nirvāṇa for All or Asurajang 阿修羅場 for All?

Despite the fact that some cynically ask when, or even if, Korea was really united during the five thousand years or so of its history, many an analyst would fully agree with the core of Pöpt'a's prophetic message. When facing the future, it definitely is in the interest of South Korea to become closer to North Korea. Wrapping up a dominant conclusion of Cho Tongho and Ha Yöngsön's research on North-South relations, Kang writes: "... stability in inter-Korean relations ... could put South Korea on a stronger footing for sustainable progress"⁵³ (Kang 2013, 8). And if this is really so, we should get "ready for what we wish for" (Lankov 2013, 234–256). Furthermore, many maintain that "the end is near," or that "there is little doubt that in the long run P'yöngyang's regime is doomed," because its "failed Stalinist utopia" can't even feed its own people. However, nobody can predict when and how this collapse will happen (Cha 2012, 462–463; Lankov 2013, 233–234). Nevertheless, what should be expected from the resulting situation, rather than "nirvāṇa for all," is "asurajang for all," i.e. decades "of dramatic upheaval, social disruption, and profound shock." Quite unrealistically, for more than half a century "Koreans have believed that the future unification of their country would be a major, cathartic event that would usher in an era of unprecedented happiness, harmony and prosperity on the Korean peninsula" (Lankov 2013, 234).

As an important step on the way to preparing for reunification, most Southern religious organizations still have to learn how to work as partners instead

of rivals. Pöpt'a asserts that the reunification process' number one obstacle will be a religious war: not only between Southern Buddhists and Protestants competing for the conquest of the North, but also between the latter and the remains of the Chosŏn Nodongdang's hard core (Pöpt'a 2013). Dreaming of the North as a *Söbang chöngt'o* 西方淨土 (Western Pure Land) without Christians, or as a *Yaksokhan ttang* 約束한 땅 (Promised Land) without Buddhists, is just as unrealistic as dreaming of it as a fully self-sufficient country. Whether one likes it or not, the Self-Reliance ideology has been part and parcel of the DPRK since 1945, and Christianity has played a crucial role in the rebuilding and consolidation of South Korea since the end of the Korean War (Luca 2013, 3). Therefore, other paradigms ought to be found in order to define a broader Korean identity acceptable to all. These paradigms should not rest solely on religious considerations, not to mention racial ones and/or the identification of a new kind of common enemy to replace the antagonizing of the North by the South and vice versa. On the contrary, at the crossroads of the best of all the religious traditions found in the peninsula, they should bring forth novel spiritualities that can be universalized. The creation of such paradigms clearly requires entirely new kinds of buddhology and theology. In order to take part in this effort, each Southern religious organization obviously ought to begin by opening up its heart and putting its own house in order.

Moreover, as Haktam and some political analysts have it, reunification ought to become everyone's concern, beginning at the grass roots level and going all the way to the top of Southern society.

The country needs a comprehensive and systematic manual on North Korean policy that can be sustained regardless of who takes office every five years. But such a basic outline cannot be made without public consensus and understanding. (Kang 2013, 8)

In good measure, Haktam takes up the terminology of *kanhwasŏn* 看話禪 (keyword meditation or KWM), and of the *tonjŏm nonjaeng* 頓漸論爭 (sudden/gradual debate) that goes along with it, to describe how the reunification process ought to be tackled. Since the 1960s, these terms have constituted South Korean

Buddhism's hallmark (Senécal 2012, 89, 118–120). For Haktam, the question “why are we divided?” ought to become everyone's *hwadu* 話頭 (key word or critical phrase). The first step to solving that *hwadu* is a *haeo* 解悟 (understanding-awakening) to the fact that reunification is essential, and the second step, a *chōmsu* 漸修 (gradual practice) to prepare for it, because in no way will reunification be a *tono tonsu* 頓悟頓修 (sudden awakening/sudden practice), i.e. as mentioned above; it will not be fully achieved all at once like a sudden and irreversible awakening to a nirvanic state of mind (Haktam 2008a, 433–443).

Against that backdrop, this essay has demonstrated how difficult working with Northern Buddhists is. For the time being, a “Korean Buddhism” transcending all the existing boundaries between North and South amounts to little more than an “imaginary community.” Definitely, Northern Buddhists are still extant in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Moreover, quantitatively speaking they probably are the “most active” and the “most powerful” religious group there, but qualitatively speaking they still are, like all other Northern religious organizations, in the orbit of the Juche ideology into which they fell after liberation. A mere glimpse at the Chobulyōn's “Who's Who?” is sufficient to realize this. Nevertheless, some testimonies allow one to believe that at least some North Korean Buddhists are fully conscious of the situation they are in (Pöpt'a 2013). The question then becomes: “What alternative do they really have?” Consequently, for Pöpt'a it is of the outmost importance to work with Northern Buddhists, accepting them as they are. Because as much as they will grow through the opportunities offered to them by Southerners, so also will DPRK's society⁵⁴ as a whole, as well as the long run prospect for reunification and peace in Northeast Asia. But above all, at the crossroads of such lofty ideals and today's harsh realities, Pöpt'a insists that it is the moral duty of all Mahayanists to do their best to try to feed any hungry Northerner, Buddhist or not. Because, as his chief motto has it: “*Pab'i t'ongil igo, pab'i p'yōnghwa go, pab'i hūmang ida*” 밥이 統一이고, 밥이平和고 밥이希望이다 (“Rice is reunification, rice is peace, and rice is hope”) (Pöpt'a 2013).

Ups and Downs of Religions in North Korea*

Time Divisions	Timeline	Characteristics	Political Background	Remarks
1st Period	1945.8–1949 Repression and/or suppression	Era of indirect repression and utilization of religions in the Front Line Policy for a (military) Reunification with the South	1946.3; Land Reform Decree 14,855 <i>chôngbo</i> ⁵⁵ of temple and church property confiscated without compensation. Chosŏn minjudang & Chŏndogyo chông'udang put under the umbrella of the Fatherland Democratic Front Line Body . Religions affiliated with the Reunification Front Line Body receive a kind of political consideration.	Constitution of September 1948 Article 14: "Citizens can enjoy freedom of faith and religious practice."
2nd Period	1950–1953 Full-fledged repression	Era of oppression	6.25 Uprising Suppression of religious practices and gatherings. The Reunification Front Line Policy gives good treatment to religious organizations accepting the use of violent means to deal with the South.	
3rd Period	1954–1972 No more religions	Era of Complete loss of human and material resources	Socialist Reform Era (1953–1958) As agriculture is collectivized and the industry is transferred to state ownership, religions lose all their human and material assets.	1972 Revised Constitution Article 54: "Citizens can enjoy both religious freedom and freedom to make anti-religious propaganda."
4th Period	1972–2013 Religious comeback	Era of Comeback Religions are used as a tool for the Reunification Movement	The DPRK needs a Reunification Front Line Policy for the North-South talks. Two religious political parties and three religious associations are re-established. Attempts to make contacts with overseas Koreans and Christians. 1972; Yushin Constitution	1983: DPRK publishes a war time use 'camouflaged' Bible. 1988: DPRK celebrates Buddha's Birthday. 1989: Koryŏ Tripitaka annotated version; Pŏpt'a visits DPRK. 1991: North & South Buddhists meet in LA. 1992: DPRK revises Constitution Foundation of the

Time Divisions	Timeline	Characteristics	Political Background	Remarks
			1973: Kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung. 1974: Minch'ong Hagnyŏn Sagon, Inhyŏktang Sagon. 1980: May 18th Kwangju Uprising. 1987: June 10th Student Uprising. 1988: Seoul Olympics 1991: North and South join the UN. 1994: Kim Il Sung dies. Mid 1990s: North Korean famine. 1998: Kim Dae-jung presidency. Sunshine Policy: huge increase of humanitarian aid for the North. Opening of Kūmgangsān's tourist area. 2000: 6.15 North–South Joint Declaration. 2003: Roh Moo-hyun presidency. 2006.10: North Korea's 1st nuclear test. 2008: Lee Myung-bak presidency. Sunshine Policy ends. Kūmgangsān tourist area closed. Humanitarian aid drastically reduced. 2009.5: North Korea's 2nd nuclear test. 2010.3: Sinking of the Ch'ōnan. 2010.9: Bombardment of Yŏnp'yŏngdo. 2013.2: North Korea's 3rd nuclear test. Park Geun-hye presidency. 2013.4: Kaesŏng industrial area closed.	P'yŏngburhyŏp 1995; Beijing North-South Buddhist Talks. 1997: Joint celebration of Buddha's Birthday. 1997–98: Kūmgang Noodle Factory. 1998.8: Pak T'aeho's Choguk T'ongil-sang Rebuilding of Yŏngt'ong-sa. (2003–5) & Singye-sa (2004–7).

* Chart first published in *Naeoe Tongsin* 内外通信 (no. 322, March 10, 1983), then updated by Pöpt'a (Pöpt'a 2000, 87–88), and then again updated as well as adapted and translated from the Korean by the author of this essay.

Notes

- * This work was supported by the Sogang University Research Grant of 2012. I am most grateful to the Chogyejong's Ŭijangnim (議長님 Chairman) Venerable Hyangjök 香寂 (b. 1950) who kindly introduced me and the *Journal of Korean Religions* to Venerable Pöpt'a 法舵 and Venerable Chejōng 濟政. Through a few key conversations, Hyangjök helped me to understand how South Korean Buddhism relates to its Northern counterpart, and how it is preparing itself for the peninsula's reunification. I am also very grateful to Ms. Kwōn Yōndam 權蓮潭 from Sogang University's Institute for the Study of Religion, without whose patient help it would have been impossible to gather and master all the data on which this essay is based.
- 1 *Liuzu tanjing*, T 2007.48.337b3-5.
 - 2 I use "reunification" as opposed to "unification" because it means "the joining together again of a country [...] that has been divided into two [...] parts for some time" (*Collins Cobuild Advanced Learners English Dictionary*, Harper Collins, 2004).
 - 3 *Ilch'ae chungsaeng siryu pulsōng* 一切衆生 悉有佛性 (*Daniepan-jing* 大涅槃經 15, T 75.12.704c12).
 - 4 *Saengsa yunhoe* 生死輪廻.
 - 5 Awakening can also take place in a variety of subtle combinations of gradualness and suddenness.
 - 6 *Fanyi mingyiji* 翻譯名義集, T 2131.54.1060c2 and *Mahe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, T 1911.46.6a18.
 - 7 Such tenets leave entirely open the question of the exact nature of nirvāṇa.
 - 8 An expression common in Korean Buddhism due to Hwaōm 華嚴 influences (Muller 2007).
 - 9 See note 1.
 - 10 *Pulgyo nūn Nambuk munhwa kongdongch'e ŭi ch'oedae kongyaksu* 佛教三南北文化共同體의 最大公約數 (Sin 1995, 64).
 - 11 Yi's eleven articles on North Korean Buddhism are a good source of firsthand data, albeit generally more optimistic than analytical and critical.
 - 12 In 2000, Pöpt'a published an updated Korean version of his thesis, originally written in English.
 - 13 Located in Kangwōn-do Kosōnggun 江原道 高城郡. Originally Singye-sa 新溪寺, it was founded in 519 by Pophūng 法興 (?–540), Silla's twenty-third king, and destroyed by American bombers in June 1951. The remains of hundreds of people have been unearthed during the reconstruction work (Chejōng 2013). It is the temple

- where Hyobong Hangnul 曉峯學訥 (1888–1966), the first Patriarch of the Chogyejong (1962–1966) started monastic life under the authority of Sōktu Pot’aek 石頭寶澤 (Kim Kyōngjip 2010, 45–76; Sōnhak Sajōn 1995, 754–755).
- 14 Although “Choburyōn” also is an acceptable pronunciation, this is the Northerners’ one.
 - 15 The name given to North Korea by Northerners.
 - 16 This figure—like many others provided in this essay—varies, sometimes quite considerably, once going up to 1,600 monks and nuns (T’ongil yōn’guwōn 2002, 10). This is due to a lack of accuracy on the part of the authors. Actually, Pōpt’a clearly explains that the 1600 figure corresponds to their number at the end of the Japanese Rule in 1945 (Pōpt’a 2000, 104). It means that this number drastically and constantly dwindled during the first five years spent under communist rule, i.e. between Liberation Day on August 15, 1945 (*Kwangbokchōl* 光復節) and the breakout of the Korean War on June 25, 1950 (Yugio 六二五).
 - 17 Curiously, the number of temples registered by the Chosōn Ch’ongdokbu (總督府 Governor’s Headquarters) in 1939, 403, and the number published by the Chosōn Chungang Yōn’gam 中央年鑑 (Central Yearbook) in 1945, around 400, are much smaller than the figure of 1950 (Pōpt’a 2000, 97; 104; 109). After taking power, the Workers’ Party of Chosōn may have registered more “temples,” i.e. smaller structures like hermitages, in order to confiscate more monastic property.
 - 18 Depending on the sources, this figure varies from 64 (Yi Chibōm 2012e, 5) to 67 (Sim Chuwan 2009, 150–152). The reason is that some lists do not include Yōng-t’ong-sa 靈通寺 in Kaesōng and Singye-sa 神溪寺 in Kūmgang-san, which have been recently rebuilt, and Yōngmyōng-sa 永明寺, which is being used as a *ch’odaeso* 招待所, because of its convenient location in the Moranbong area of P’yōngyang. Sim Chuwan has updated the list of the temples still extant. Two thirds of the temples are administered by the Yumul Pojon Chidoguk 遺物保存指導局 (Office Providing Guidance for the Preservation of Historical Vestiges) and the remaining third by the Chobulyōn (T’ongil yōn’guwōn 2002, 39).
 - 19 Haktam seems to have inspired himself from these chronologies (Haktam 2008b, 156–175).
 - 20 Pōpt’a divides the T’ongil yōn’guwōn’s second period in two and then combines its third and fourth periods into a single one. The subtle reasons behind those differences having no serious impact on the content of this essay, they have not been taken into consideration.

- 21 I have not found the exact percentage of confiscated land overall.
- 22 Quoting Sawa Masahiko in Kim Hūngsu, *Haebang hu Pukhan kyohoesa* 解放後 北韓教會史.
- 23 Quoting the *Chosŏn Central Yearbook* (*Chosŏn chungang yŏn'gam* 中央年鑑) of 1950.
- 24 All this data points to a strong pattern of collaboration between North Korean Buddhism and political power since the end of the Chosŏn dynasty (Ch'oe Pyŏnghŏn 2011, 624).
- 25 The Ch'ŏndogyŏ was—and still is—an indigenous religion.
- 26 Kim Seryul (1946–1948) and An Yongsuk (1963–1978). Kim Sunggyŏk was appointed as a proxy from 1948 until an undetermined date (Pöpt'a 2000, 154–156).
- 27 Located on Mount Myohyang 妙香山, it was restored in 1976 (Pöpt'a 2000, 97) and is used as a tourist attraction and since 1980 has been designated a *yŏksa pangmulgwan* (歷史博物館 historical museum) (Pöpt'a 2000, 267). It is the monastery from which Sŏsan Taesa 西山大師 called up an army of monks (Pöpt'a 2000, 280). Since it is also the temple where North Korean Buddhism stores its own version of the Grand Tripiṭaka (*p'alman taejanggyŏng* 八萬大藏經), it can be thought of as the “North Korean Haein-sa 海印寺” and the most representative North Korean temple (Pöpt'a 1996, 414). Actually, this version of the Buddhist Canon is not a complete one; it consists of three thousand wooden blocks carved during the Chosŏn dynasty (Pöpt'a 2000, 116, 163–164).
- 28 Interestingly, the dates provided by Yi Chibŏm, who met Pak T'aeho, are from 1937 to 1945 (Yi Chibŏm 2012k, 2). Given Pöpt'a's long and deep friendship with Pak T'aeho, I have used the dates that he provides.
- 29 Pak “declared martial law and dissolved the National Assembly while banning political parties and closing all schools and universities,” before holding a national referendum ratifying the new Yusin 維新 Constitution (Heo 2010, 23).
- 30 In contrast with other countries who all have a number of Buddhist bodies registered, North Korea has only one.
- 31 A term used as a synonym of Sökka T'ansinil, although while it celebrates the awakening experience of the Buddha, the latter celebrates his birth.
- 32 According to Pöpt'a, this translation is far from complete (Yi Chibŏm 2012j, 5). See note 27.
- 33 These include Father Mun Kyuhyŏn, Pastor Mun Ikhwan and the Catholic laywoman Im Sugyŏng, etc.
- 34 T'ae-pyŏnghwa 泰平和 and/or T'ae-hwahae 泰和解.

- 35 See note 10.
- 36 Like clergymen who are “regarded as spies of American imperialists (Pöpt’a 1996, 444).”
- 37 Pöpt’a does not clearly indicate which primary sources he used for these two quotations found in the conclusive remarks of his doctoral thesis. He only vaguely refers the reader to chapter 5 of the latter. He seems to be taking the stand of the Juche ideology as he reformulates in his own words the gist of that doctrine and of its relation to Buddhism. I had to correct Pöpt’a’s English to make it more readable.
- 38 These examples and many others can be found in Pöpt’a 1996, 454–476 and 2000, 203–229.
- 39 Ten of these entries can be found in Pöpt’a 1996, 477–493 and all the fifteen in Pöpt’a 2000, 229–248.
- 40 See note 27.
- 41 For instance, Pak Söngbae and the late Yi Kiyöng.
- 42 Interestingly, those who have a direct experience of North Korea, apparently unimpressed by the bulk of Haktam’s work, consider its content as a *t’aksang kongnon* 卓上空論 (armchair theory).
- 43 Without ever clearly admitting it, many a Korean scholar carefully avoids any research topic related to North Korea.
- 44 “A rectangular ceremonial vestment that is worn draped over the left shoulder by Buddhist monks in East Asia and is emblematic of the robes originally worn by Buddhist monks in India” (Muller 2011).
- 45 It was built at the beginning of the Koryö period (918–1392), in 1027, and was destroyed sometime in the sixteenth century. It is the monastery where Ŭich’ön 義天 (1155–1101), alias T’aegak Kuksa 大覺國師, began his monastic life, where he founded the Korean Ch’önt’aejong 天台宗, and where he died. It contains several North Korean national treasures: the stupa containing T’aegak’s *sari* 舍利 (relics), a stone monument to his memory etc. The South Korean Ch’önt’aejong has contributed large sums of money to buy the materials required for the reconstruction, among which are 460,000 tiles to cover the roofs of the dozen or so buildings of the compound (T’aehan Ch’önt’aejong 2005). Yöngt’ong-sa is registered on UNESCO’s World Heritage List.
- 46 See note 13.
- 47 For more information on Pöpt’a’s doctrinal basis for the practice of Buddhist compassion, see Sin Pöpt’a 2003, 194–202.
- 48 See note 45.

- 49 For more information on the reconstruction see Cho Sŏngnyŏl 2009, 169–170.
- 50 See note 13.
- 51 See note 34.
- 52 When families from the North and the South meet in P'anmunjŏm after decades of separation, they do not have much to say to one another.
- 53 See Ha Yŏngsŏn & Cho Tongho 2010 and Cho Tongho 2012.
- 54 See Yun Ihŭm 1989, 228–229.
- 55 5,955,706,845 m², representing a mere 1.4 percent of the total amount of land confiscated (Pŏpt'a 2000, 111).

References

- Baker, Don. 2008. *Korean Spirituality*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- . 2013. "Is North Korea a Religious Country? Juche and the Definition of Religion." Paper presented at the Institute for the Study of Religion, Sogang University, Seoul, June 18, 2013.
- Cha, Victor. 2012. *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*. London: The Bodley Head.
- Chang Yŏngsŏp. 2006. "'Singyesa togam' Chejŏng Sŭnim i malhanŭn Kŭmgangsan." *Pulgyo sinmun*, November 4. <http://www.ibulgyo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=76933> (accessed August 20, 2013).
- Cho Sŏngnyŏl. 2009. "Nambuk Pulgyo ŭi t'onghap chŏllyak kwa ch'ujin kwaje." In Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chŏngch'aek yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe, ed., 155–180.
- Chosŏn sahoe kwahagwŏn ch'ŏrhak yŏn'guso. 1988. *Ch'ŏrhak Sajŏn*. Taejŏn: Tosŏ Ch'ulp'an Him.
- Cho Tongho [Jo Dongho], ed. 2012. *Kongjin ŭl wihan Nambuk kyŏnghyŏp chŏllyak: posu wa chinbo ka hamkke komin hada*. Seoul: Tong Asia yŏn'guwŏn.
- Chŏng Yŏngch'ŏl. 2009. "Pulgyogyŏe taebuk chiwŏn hyŏmnyŏk saŏp ŭi panghyang kwa kwaje." In Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chŏngch'aek yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe, ed., 85–120.
- Chŏng Yonggil. 2004. "Hanbando t'ongil esŏ chonggyo ŭi yŏkhal." *Han-Tok sahoe kwahak nonch'ong* 14(2): 21–52. <http://earticle.net/article.aspx?sn=50049> (accessed August 20, 2013).

- Ch'oe Pyŏnghŏn. 2011. "Han'guk Pulgyo sasang ūi Chogyejong." In [Proceedings of] *The 25th Biennial AKSE Conference 2*. Moscow, June 17–20, 2011, 613–25. Leiden: Association for Korean Studies in Europe.
- Ch'oe Sŭnghyŏn. 2007. "Singye-sa pogwŏn ūro Nambuk Pulgyo Kwangye ch'ŏngsinho." *Chugan Pulgyo*, October 20. <http://www.jubul.co.kr/news/13854> (accessed September 12, 2013).
- Ch'ŏrhak Sajŏn. See Chosŏn sahoe kwahagwŏn ch'ŏrhak yŏn'guso.
- Ha Yŏngsŏn & Tongho Cho. 2010. *Pukhan 2032: sŏnjinhwa ro kanŭn kongjin chŏllyak*. Seoul: Tong Asia yŏn'guwŏn.
- Haktam. 2003a. *Pundan ūl nŏmŏ wŏnyung muae ūi saengmyŏng padaro*. Seoul: K'ŭnsure.
- . 2003b. *Pundan ūl nŏmŏ wŏnyung muae ūi saengmyŏng padaro*. Seoul: K'ŭnsure.
- Heo Uk and Terrence Roering. 2010. *South Korea since 1980*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hong Tayŏng. 2011. "P'yŏngburhyŏp, Pukhan Kŭmgang ppang kongjang e milga'ru chiwŏn." *Pulgyo sinmun*, October 10. <http://www.ibulgyo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=113733> (accessed August 20, 2013).
- Kang Youngjin. 2013. "A Sustainable Strategy for the North." *International Herald Tribune*, January 21.
- Kim Bo-geun. 2013. "Korea studies scholars gather for a 'peace journey.'" *Hankyoreh* [Hankyŏre], July 13. http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/596452.html (accessed August 20, 2013).
- Kim Chongnak. 2006. "Puch'ŏnim osin tar e mannan 21 segi Han'guk Pulgyo ūi nyuridŏ." *Munhwa ilbo*, May 4. http://www.munhwa.com/news/news_print.html?no=2006050401032030073002 (accessed August 20, 2013).
- Kim Kyŏngjip. 2010. "Hyobong ūi chŏnghye kyŏlsa wa sidaejŏk ūiui." *Pojo Sasang* 33 (February): 45–76.
- Kim Pyŏngno. 2002. *Pukhan chonggyo chŏngch'aek ūi pyŏnhwa wa chonggyo silt'ae*. Seoul: T'ongil yŏn'guwŏn. http://www.kinu.or.kr/report/report_01_01.jsp?page=1&num=456&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA02&ses=&category=6 (accessed August 15, 2013).
- Kim Yŏnghyŏn. 2009. "T'ongil gwa Pulgyo ūi rodŭmaep." In Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chŏngch'aek yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe, ed., 69–81.
- Ko Yŏngsŏp. 2009. "Pulgyo ūi t'onghap sasang: mullijŏk t'ongil kwa hwahakchŏk t'onghap." In Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chŏngch'aek yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe, ed., 9–40.

- Kyŏnghyang tatk'ŏm. 2010. "Kang Kigap · Pak Wŏnsun tŭng ch'inbuk · pangukka insa myŏngdan palp'yo." *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, March 12. http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201003121343551&code=910100 (accessed August 15, 2013).
- Lankov, Andrei. 2013. *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Luca, Nathalie. 2013. "De la présentification de Dieu à la présentification du rêve : motiver en entreprise." In [Proceedings of] *Les figures de l'entrepreneuriat religieux* (unpublished conference proceedings), Paris, June 14, 2013: 3.
- Muller, Charles. See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism in "Websites."
- Pak Ch'anuk. 2000. *Kongdong kyŏngbi kuyŏk JSA*. Directed by Ch'anuk Pak. Seoul: Myŏng p'illŭm. DVD.
- Pöpt'a. 1995. "Pulgyo nŭn Nambuk munhwa kongdongch'e ŭi ch'oedae kongyaksu." *Pukhan* (July).
- . 1996. "A Study of Buddhism in North Korea in the Late Twentieth Century: an Investigation of Juche Ideology and Traditional Buddhist Thought in Korea." Ph. D. diss., Clayton University, St. Louis, Missouri. USA. In *Pukhan Pulgyo yŏn'gu*, 361–503. Seoul: Minjoksa.
- . 2000. *Pukhan Pulgyo yŏn'gu: 20 segi ch'oegŭnse ŭi Pukhan Pulgyo pyŏnhwa e taehan yŏn'gu* [Study of Buddhism in North Korea in the late twentieth century]. Seoul: Minjoksa.
- . 2003. "Pulgyo ipchang esŏ pon Nambuk hwahae hyŏmnyŏk." *Saengmyŏng munhwa ch'ongsŏ 5 chip*: 194–202. Sogang University: Saegmyŏng munhwa yŏn'guso.
- Sawa Masahik'o. 1992. "Haebang ihu Pukhan chiyŏk Kidokkyo" [Christianity in northern Korea following liberation]. In *Haebang hu Pukhan kyohoesa: yŏn'gu · chŭngŏn · charyo*, edited by Kim Hŭngsu, 13–51. Seoul: Tasan külbang.
- Senécal, Bernard. 2012. "Sŏn Master T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl's Legacy: A Reflection on the Political Background of the Korean Sudden/Gradual Debate." *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 25 (1): 89–126.
- Sim Chuwan. 2009. "Nambuk Pulgyo munhwa yusan kyoryu ŭi chŏnmang gwa kwaje." In *Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chongch'aek yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe*, ed., 121–154. Sin Kwangsu [Shin, Kwang Su]. See Pöpt'a.
- Sin Pöpt'a. See Pöpt'a.
- Sŏ Myŏngwŏn. See Senécal.

- Song Chihüi. 2013. "Nambuk kwan'gye chönmang kwa Pulgyogye yökhal." *Pöpbö sinmun*. January 21. http://www.beopbo.com/news/view.html?smode=&skey=%B3%B2%BA%CF%B0%FC%B0%E8+%C0%FC%B8%C1%B0%FA+%BA%D2%B1%B3%B0%E8+%BF%AA%C7%D2&ori_skey=%B3%B2%BA%CF%B0%FC%B0%E8&localize=&skind=both&sterm=§ion=1&category=112&no=73993 (accessed August 15, 2013).
- Sönhak Sajön. See Yi Chölgyo, Ilji & Sin Kyut'ak, eds.
- Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chöngch'aek yön'gu wiwönhoe. 2009. *Minjok t'ongil kwa Pulgyo t'onghap: Nambuk Pulgyo üi kyoryu wa hyömnnyök pangan*. Seoul: Chogyejong ch'ulp'ansa.
- T'ongil yön'guwön. 2002. *Nambukhan t'onghap ül wihan chonggyo kyoryu · hyömnnyök üi chedohwa pangan*. Seoul: T'ongil yön'guwön.
- Yi Chiböm. 2000. "Pukhan Pulgyo üi öje wa onül." *Pulgyo p'yöngnon [Buddhist Review]* 5. Available online <http://www.budreview.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=453> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2009. "Nambuk Pulgyo kyoryu üi yöksa wa kwaje." In Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong t'ongil chöngch'aek yön'gu wiwönhoe, ed., 41–68.
- . 2012a. "Kim Chöngün sidae üi Pukhan Pulgyo: Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 1." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, February 7. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=17255> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012b. "Pukhan Pulgyo nün sar'a itta: Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 2." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, February 20. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=17307> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012c. "Pukhan Pulgyo rül umjigi nün saramdül: Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 3." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, March 8. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=17412> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012d. "Pukhan Pulgyo rül umjigi nün saramdül II : Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 4." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, March 30. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=17585> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012e. "Onülnal Pukhan Pulgyo üi hyönhwang: Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 5." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, April 13. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=17674> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012f. "Pukhan Pulgyo üi yöksa: Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 6." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, May 1. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=17797> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012g. "Chosön Pulgyodo yonmaeng chungang wiwönhoe: Pukhan Pulgyo üi chaebalgjön 7." *Pulgyo tatk'öm*, May 23. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=18089> (accessed August 15, 2013).

- . 2012h. “Pukhan ūi Chop’ail pŏphoe: Pukhan Pulgyo ūi chaebalgyŏn 8.” *Pulgyo tat’k’ŏm*, May, 26, 2012. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=18134> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012i. “Pukhan ūi Pulgyo kyoyuk kigwan: Pukhan Pulgyo ūi chaebalgyŏn 9.” *Pulgyo tat’k’ŏm*, July 3. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=18490> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012j. “Pukhan ūi yŏkkyŏng saŏp: Pukhan Pulgyo ūi chaebalgyŏn 10.” *Pulgyo tat’k’ŏm*, August 23. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=18887> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- . 2012k. “Pukhan Pulgyo ūi munjung ūn: Pukhan Pulgyo ūi chaebalgyŏn 11.” *Pulgyo tat’k’ŏm*, November 29. <http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=19787> (accessed August 15, 2013).
- Yi Chŏlgyo, Ilji & Sin Kyut’ak, eds. 1995. *Sŏnhak Sajŏn*. Seoul: Puljisa.
- Yi Hakchong. 2012. “P’yŏngburhyŏp t’ongil undong maejin 20 tol inde Pab i t’ongil · p’yŏnghwa · hŭimang ira oech’yŏya hadani!” *Midiŏ Buddha*, April 27. http://www.mediabuddha.net/bbs/board.php?bo_table=07_1&wr_id=11006 (accessed August 18, 2013).
- Yi Kyŏngmi. 2011. “Pŏpt’a Sŭnim “Pab i t’ongil iyo p’yŏnghwa.” *Hankyŏre* [Hankyoreh], November 29. http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/507723.html (accessed August 15, 2013).
- Yu Pyŏngmun. 2003. “15 nyŏn Nambuk kyoryu han kil kŏrŏon P’yŏngbulhyŏp Hoejang Pŏpt’a Sŭnim.” *Mŭnjok* 21 26 (May): 106–109.
- Yun Ihŭm. 1989. “Pukhan ūi chonggyo silt’ae.” *T’ongil munje yŏn’gu* 1(2): 207–229. <http://www.dbpia.co.kr/Article/93602>.

Interviews

Chejŏng. Interview by author. Seoul, June 11, 2013.

Pŏpt’a. Interview by author. Seoul, April 22, 2013.

Websites

Choguk p’yŏnghwa t’ongil Pulgyo hyŏphoe (P’yŏngbulhyŏp) (www.bubtanet.org/bubta/info/main)

Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/)

Taehan Pulgyo Chŏnt’aejong. (http://www.cheontae.org/04_group/ytong/main.htm?hcode=about_yt)

World Fellowship of Buddhists (www.buddhanet.net/WFB/WFB_Regional-Centres.htm)